

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT JA

SUBJ: DIET IN HOME STRETCH EXPECTED TO PASS KEY BILLS

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

REF: TOKYO 12047

SUMMARY: AS DIET ENTERED FINAL WEEK OF TWICE-
EXTENDED MARATHON SESSION WHICH BEGAN LAST
DECEMBER. GOJ APPEARED LIKELY THIS WEEKEND TO

ACHIEVE PASSAGE OF TWO CONTROVERSIAL LEGISLATIVE
PACKAGES RELATED TO DEFENSE AND HIGHER EDUCATION
OVERRIDING LAST DITCH OPPOSITION EFFORTS TO ABORT
THEM. SUCCESSFUL ENACTMENT OF KEY LEGISLATION
SOMEWHAT ENHANCES OTHERWISE UNIMPRESSIVE
LEGISLATIVE RECORD FOR TANAKA GOVERNMENT. END
SUMMARY

1. WITH ONLY FIVE DAYS REMAINING IN RECORD-
BREAKING 280-DAY DIET SESSION WHICH BEGAN LAST
DECEMBER, TANAKA GOVERNMENT AND RULING
LDP APPEARS TO HAVE WON ITS LONG STRUGGLE TO
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ACHIEVE PASSAGE OF LAST KEY ITEMS ON ITS

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA DESPITE DESPERATE LAST DITCH RESISTANCE BY MAJOR OPPOSITION PARTIES. AFTER ACHIEVING COMPROMISE OVER LONG-DEBATED NATIONAL RAILWAYS FARE RAISE AND GOVERNMENT HEALTH INSURANCE PENSION BILLS WHICH ENACTED INTO LAW EARLIER THIS WEEK (REFTEL), GOJ/LDP AND OPPOSITION MOVED INTO SHARP CONFRONTATION OVER REMAINING KEY GOJ LEGISLATIVE ITEMS, INCLUDING BILL TO RAISE JSDF FORCE LEVELS AND BILL TO ESTABLISH NEW NATIONAL UNIVERSITY AT TSUKUBA NEAR TOKYO. DECISION SEPTEMBER 20 OF UPPER HOUSE PRESIDENT KENZO KONO TO CUT SHORT COMMITTEE DELIBERATIONS AND SUBMIT PENDING BILLS TO PLENARY SESSION FOR FINAL VOTE BEFORE DIET EXPIRES SEPTEMBER 27, VIRTUALLY ASSURES THEIR PASSAGE THIS SESSION.

2. PRESIDENT KONO'S DECISION CAME AFTER HIS EARLIER EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE COMPROMISE AGREEMENT BETWEEN GOJ/LDP AND OPPOSITION PARTIES FAILED. WITH DSP REMAINING ON SIDELINES, THREE MAJOR OPPOSITION PARTIES--JSP, KOMEITO, JCP--DECIDED TO CONTINUE THEIR OPPOSITION TO BILLS BY SUBMITTING SERIES OF NON-CONFIDENCE MOTIONS IN LOWER HOUSE AGAINST DEFENSE AGENCY DIRGEN SADANORI YAMANAKA, EDUCATION MINISTER SEISUKE OKUNO, AND ENTIRE TANAKA CABINET. THIS MANEUVER HAS EFFECT OF TEMPORARILY DELAYING ACTION ON CONTROVERSIAL LEGISLATION SINCE UPPER HOUSE PLENARY CANNOT BE HELD UNTIL CENSURE ACTIONS WHICH HAVE PARLIAMENTARY PRIORITY ARE COMPLETED IN LOWER HOUSE. LDP MAJORITY IN LOWER HOUSE HANDILY VOTED DOWN CENSURE MOTIONS AGAINST YAMANAKA AND OKUNO ON FRIDAY AND IS EXPECTED TO DISPOSE OF ACTION AGAINST CABINET AS WHOLE AT SATURDAY AFTERNOON PLENARY. THIS IS EXPECTED TO CLEAR WAY FOR FINAL UPPER HOUSE ACTION ON DEFENSE AND UNIVERSITY BILLS EITHER SATURDAY EVENING OR SUNDAY.

3. FACT THAT TANAKA GOVERNMENT'S KEY BILLS WERE NOT PASSED UNTIL LAST TEN DAYS OF TWICE-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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EXTENDED SESSION AND FACT THAT OTHER IMPORTANT GOJ LEGISLATION FAILED EVEN TO WIN PLACE ON DOCKET MAKES FOR GENERALLY UNIMPRESSIVE LEGISLATIVE RECORD FOR TANAKA ADMINISTRATION, WHICH MANAGED TO ENACT ONLY ABOUT 88 OUT OF 123 BILLS IN LEGISLATIVE HOPPER THIS SESSION. NEVERTHELESS, PASSGE OF KEY LEGISLATION ON WHICH SO MUCH GOJ PRESTIGE HAD BEEN STAKED HAS PROBABLY

CONTRIBUTED IMPORTANTLY TO ENHANCING IMAGE
AND BOLSTERING MORALE OF BOTH GOVERNMENT
AND LDP.
SHOESMITH

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